

know that label signifies compliance with basic worker protection laws and human rights guarantees. But in the CNMI, that made in USA label is used to conceal systematic exploitation.

Last week, President Clinton and garment industry leaders announced a U.S. apparel industry partnership dedicated to eliminating sweatshop working conditions around the world. Those efforts must also focus on our own soil, on the CNMI, where conditions that could not be tolerated anywhere elsewhere in America flourish with the blessings of the local government.

In the CNMI, human rights and the basic rights all American workers are supposed to enjoy are routinely brushed aside in the pursuit of an economic miracle. The CNMI Government is currently spending in excess of \$1 million in an unprecedented effort to paint a highly favorable picture of its economy.

But the record indicates this is no economic miracle; it is an economic mirage, built on exploited foreign labor.

Freed from U.S. immigration and minimum wage laws, the CNMI—

Uses its immigration policy to open its borders to a flood of foreign workers—from the Philippines, China, and other Asian countries—that now outnumber the indigenous population.

Maintains a minimum wage of as little as \$2.90 an hour for garment workers—and far less for household workers and farmers—despite promises to bring wages to the Federal level.

Ignores employer restrictions against U.S. laws—such as the right to unionize and to receive all wages earned, instead maintaining a bureaucracy that makes it all but impossible for workers to seek redress.

Fails to prosecute aggressively those who mistreat and abuse foreign labor by forcing them into prostitution and other types of involuntary sexual activity, who restrict their expressions of political beliefs, and who deny them the wages they have earned. In fact, many workers have said that speaking out against battery and rape, against unsanitary living barracks, against illegal wage withholdings, long hours or violations of their work contract, can result in prompt deportation and the forfeiture of their wages.

Congress in recent years, on a bipartisan basis, has called upon the CNMI to end these abuses, but with little effect. In fact, the CNMI Government has passed several laws that actually roll back worker protections, and broke a promise to the U.S. Congress to raise its minimum wage across the board, to the Federal level.

This continuing pattern of abuse and indifference to human exploitation demands a rapid response from the Congress and from the Clinton administration. Today, along with several cosponsors, I am introducing legislation to protect the integrity of the "Made in USA" label by only permitting its use when all applicable labor laws are obeyed.

This legislation will increase the minimum wage in the CNMI in stages until it matches the Federal level.

Lastly, this legislation will also bring the CNMI under the Immigration and Naturalization Service which, unlike the CNMI's Government, has the skills and resources to establish credible and enforceable policies that do not sanction the exploitation of men and women.

HOME EDUCATION WEEK

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to voice my support along with the Missouri State Senate and the Missouri House of Representatives for home education. The Missouri General Assembly has designated the second week of May as Home Education Week. Missouri has been recognized as a leader nationwide in the home education movement. Home Education Week is a good way to acknowledge those parents in Missouri who have helped to establish a strong foundation for quality home education.

Home education has always been unique because it provides the opportunity for children to be taught by their parents or someone the parents trust. Home educators are able to meet the individual needs of their children by designing educational lessons for each child. They also provide children in home education numerous opportunities to learn through hands-on activities, where they are able to apply what they are learning in real-life settings. The one-on-one interpersonal ties that are developed in home education between a parent and their children establish solid mentoring relationships.

I know of many families in the Seventh District of Missouri that I represent who educate their children through more than just their textbooks. They regularly take field trips and conduct science experiments so that they can apply what they are learning. I know one family who has entered award-winning projects in the Ozark Empire Fair in science and drawing competitions as well as winning awards regionally and statewide in speech contests. The Will Purvis family is one of many southwest Missouri families who are making a visible difference in the education their children through home education.

I want to thank each parent who has made the decision to educate their children at home. This decision requires a great amount of dedication. This dedication requires planning and preparation that involves many extra hours and late nights of preparation. Their dedication results pay off in home-educated students that do well when they compete with their peers nationwide in private and public schools and in higher education. We should continue to support their dedication as they continue to make a visible difference.

IN HONOR OF TERTULIAS DE ANTANO AND ITS FOUNDER LIDIA GIL-RAMOS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN NORTH HUDSON COUNTY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional woman, Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and the exceptional organization which she founded, Tertulias de Antano. The contributions of Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and

Tertulias de Antano will be celebrated at the group's 23d Anniversary Dinner Dance to be held at Schutzen Park in North Bergen, NJ, on Sunday, April 27, 1997.

Such a well-respected program, Tertulias de Antano, is the result of the unwavering dedication of its founder Lidia Gil-Ramos. Before arriving in Union City, NJ, in 1965, she taught both elementary school and elderly farm workers in her homeland of Cuba. Education was also a personal passion for Ms. Gil-Ramos. She earned her masters degree from the University of Havana. This extraordinary woman then became director of a large nursing home in San Miguel de los Banos, Matanzas in central Cuba.

Upon arriving in America, Ms. Gil-Ramos found employment as an income maintenance specialist for the Food Stamp Program in Jersey City. Her dedicated service to senior citizens began with the Cuban refugee program in her adopted hometown of Union City. There Ms. Gil-Ramos witnessed the difficult process of adjustment experienced by many Cuban seniors in their new environment. Resolved to make a positive difference in the lives of the senior citizens in the community, Ms. Gil-Ramos instituted the Tertulias de Antano recreational program on October 13, 1974.

Ms. Gil-Ramos is the heart and soul of Tertulias de Antano. This invaluable program dispenses information concerning English-language programs, health care issues, and community events to area seniors. Presently, this uniquely beneficial program is applauded by senior citizens from countries throughout Latin America who have found a new home in Hudson County. Ms. Gil-Ramos' vision and commitment to excellence are evident in the pleasure experienced by senior citizens who have benefited from the services of Tertulias de Antano.

It is an honor to have Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and Tertulias de Antano as parts of the community in my district. They are shining examples of what can be accomplished when people work together toward a common goal.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on the evening of Thursday, April 17, 1997, during rollcall vote No. 85. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES STAMP TODAY HONORING RAOUL WALLENBERG

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today at a extremely moving ceremony at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, a stamp honoring Swedish humanitarian and Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg was issued. This is a most appropriate step, and I congratulate the Postal Service for this action. Raoul Wallenberg was